

What is claimed is:

1 1. A communication method comprising the steps of:
2 providing a user profile having a collection of properties related to a user email
3 folder, the user profile further having a collection of properties related to a user instant
4 messaging (IM) account;
5 defining properties of the user email folder using the user profile; and
6 defining properties of the user IM account using the user profile.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing the user profiles
2 comprises the step of:
3 assigning a user profile to a user;
4 permitting the user assigned to the user profile to have access to the at least one
5 user email folder associated with the user profile; and
6 permitting the user assigned to the user profile to have access to the group email
7 folder.

1 3. A communication method comprising the steps of:
2 assigning a user profile to a user;
3 associating a user email folder with the user profile; and
4 associating a user instant messaging (IM) account with the user profile.

1 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:
2 defining properties associated with the user email folder as a function of the user
3 profile.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the step of defining properties associated
2 with the user email folder comprises the steps of:
3 assigning a user name associated with the user; and
4 assigning a password associated with the user name.

1 6. The method of claim 4, wherein the step of defining properties associated
2 with the user email folder comprises the step of:
3 assigning a user type associated with the user.

1 7. The method of claim 4, wherein the step of defining properties associated
2 with the user email folder comprises the step of:
3 assigning a collection of email folders to the user.

1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the step of assigning the collection of
2 email folders to the user comprises the step of:
3 storing post office protocol 3 (POP3) server information for each email folder in
4 the collection of email folders.

1 9. The method of claim 7, wherein the step of assigning the collection of
2 email folders to the user comprises the step of:
3 storing simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP) server information for each email
4 folder in the collection of email folders.

1 10. The method of claim 4, wherein the step of defining properties associated
2 with the user email folder comprises the step of:
3 storing email filter settings.

1 11. The method of claim 4, wherein the step of defining properties associated
2 with the user email folder comprises the step of:
3 storing an addressbook associated with the user.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of storing the addressbook
2 associated with the user comprises the step of:
3 assigning addressbook settings to the addressbook.

1 13. The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:
2 defining properties associated with the user IM account as a function of the user
3 profile.

1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of defining properties associated
2 with the user IM account comprises the steps of:
3 assigning a user name associated with the user; and
4 assigning a password associated with the user name.

1 15. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of defining properties associated
2 with the user IM account comprises the step of:
3 assigning a user type associated with the user.

1 16. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of defining properties associated
2 with the user IM account comprises the step of:
3 assigning a collection of IM accounts to the user.

1 17. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of defining properties associated
2 with the user IM account comprises the step of:
3 storing a contact list associated with the user.

1 18. A communication system comprising:
2 a user profile;
3 a user email folder associated with the user profile; and
4 a user instant messaging (IM) account associated with the user profile.

1 19. The system of claim 18, wherein the user profile is configured to define
2 properties associated with the user email folder.

1 20. The system of claim 19, wherein the properties associated with the user
2 email folder include at least one property selected from the group consisting of:

3 a user name;

4 a password;

5 post office protocol 3 (POP3) server information;

6 simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP) server information;

7 a collection of email folders;

8 a user type;

9 an email filter setting; and

10 an addressbook setting.

1 21. The system of claim 18, wherein the user profile is configured to define
2 properties associated with the user IM account.

1 22. The system of claim 21, wherein the properties associated with the user IM
2 account include at least one property selected from the group consisting of:

3 a user name;

4 a password;

5 a collection of IM accounts; and

6 a contact list.